FICKEISEN PINCUSHION CACTUS

(Pediocactus pee blesianus var. fickeiseniae)

STATUS: Candidate

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: This small 76 mm (3 in) tall and 38 mm (1.5 in) in diameter cactus has small (25 mm/1 in) flowers that are cream, yellow, or yellowish-green in color. The spines are corky with the central spine [9.5 mm (3/8 inch long)] ashy white and pointed up. Tubercles form a spiral pattern around plant. This cactus retracts into gravely soils after flowering and fruiting.

HABITAT: The species is known to occur on shallow soils derived from exposed layers of Kaibab limestone. Most populations occur on canyon margins or well-drained hills in Navajoan Desert or Great Plains grassland at elevations of 1,219-1,524 m (4,000-5,000 ft).

RANGE: Historic: Unknown but probably similar to the current distribution.

Current: It is known to occur in widely scattered small populations from the vicinity of Gray Mountain in Coconino County, north and west to the Arizona Strip in Coconino and Mohave counties. It may also occur near Joseph City in Navajo County.

REASONS FOR DECLINE/VULNERABILITY: Current and potential threats include off-road vehicles use, livestock grazing, mining, recreational activities, road construction, illegal collection, and herbivory. The species is a narrow endemic restricted to Kaibab limestone derived soils. Because of its rare and disjunct occurrence, this cactus is vulnerable to depopulation by damage to areas where it occurs. The species seems to have low reproductive capacity, even after favorable weather conditions.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: The species occurs on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Navajo Nation, Arizona State Land Department, and possibly the U.S. Forest Service. It may also occur on private land.

NOTES: A conservation agreement with the BLM continues to be under consideration. At this point, the proposed conservation agreement does not include other landowners.